

The following claims replace all previous versions of the claims.

1. (previously presented) A film, fiber or membrane comprising an intimate mixture of S-sulfonated keratin protein and a water soluble polymer, and a chemical cross-linking agent, the water soluble polymer selected from the group consisting of:
  - (a) poly (vinyl alcohol) (PVA) and
  - (b) poly (vinyl pyrrolidone) (PVP).
2. (canceled)
3. (previously presented) A film, fiber or membrane according to claim 1 wherein the S-sulfonated keratin protein is a S-sulfonated keratin protein fraction.
4. (previously presented) A film, fiber or membrane according to claim 3 in which the S-sulfonated keratin protein fraction is from the intermediate filament protein family.
5. (previously presented) A film, fiber or membrane according to claim 1 in which the S-sulfonated keratin protein is intact.
6. (canceled)
7. (previously presented) A method for making a material comprising:
  - (a) mixing a S-sulfonated keratin protein and a water soluble polymer to form an intimate mixture, the water soluble polymer selected from the group consisting of:
    - (a) poly (vinyl alcohol) (PVA) and
    - (b) poly (vinyl pyrrolidone) (PVP).
  - (b) casting the intimate mixture so produced; and
  - (c) drying to create a material.
8. (currently amended) A method for making a material comprising:

(a) mixing a S-sulfonated keratin protein, a chemical cross-linker, and a water soluble polymer to form an intimate mixture, the water soluble polymer selected from the group consisting of:

- (a) poly (vinyl alcohol) (PVA) and
- (b) poly (vinyl pyrrolidone) (PVP); and

(b) extruding the intimate mixture produced from step (a) into a coagulation bath through a process of wet spinning.

9. (previously presented) A method for improving the physico-mechanical properties of the materials produced by claim 7, comprising introducing a cross-linker agent to form disulfide bonds and thus remove sulfonate functionalities.

10. (previously presented) A method according to claim 9 in which the cross-linking agent used as a reductant is a thiol or thioglycollate salt.

11. (previously presented) The method according to claim 9 in which the physico-mechanical properties are wet and dry strength.

12. (original) A method according to claim 10 in which the thioglycollate salt is ammonium thioglycollate.

13. (canceled)

14. (previously presented) The method according to claim 7 or 8 wherein the S-sulfonated keratin protein is a S-sulfonated protein fraction.

15. (previously presented) The method according to claim 14 wherein the S-sulfonated keratin protein fraction is from the intermediate filament protein family.

16. (currently amended) The method according to claim 7 or 8, wherein the S-sulfonated keratin protein is intact.

17. (previously presented) A method of improving the wet strength properties of the materials produced by the method of claim 7, comprising incorporating a cross-linking agent into them.
  18. (original) A method according to claim 17 in which the cross-linking agent is a protein in the intimate mixture.
  19. (original) A method according to claim 17 in which the cross-linking agent is selected from the group consisting of formaldehyde and glutaraldehyde.
  20. (previously presented) A process for improving the mechanical properties of a material produced by a method of claim 7 or 8, comprising heat treating the composite matrix to enhance its crystalline properties.
- 21-25. (canceled)
26. (previously presented) An S-sulfonated keratin protein derivative material in which the keratin protein derivative is chemically bonded to a monomer or polymer material selected from the acrylate, epoxide or anhydride group.
- 27-28. (canceled)
29. (currently amended) The film, ~~fiber~~ or membrane of claim 1 or 8, further comprising a plasticizer.
  30. (currently amended) The film, ~~fiber~~ or membrane of claim 29, wherein the plasticizer is glycerol or polyethylene glycol
  31. (currently amended) The film, ~~fiber~~ or membrane of claim 1 or 8, wherein the cross-linking agent is formaldehyde, glutaraldehyde[.], 1-ethyl-3-(dimethylaminopropyl)carbodiimide, dimethylsuberimidate, or N,N'-methylenebisacrylamide.